

AMERICAN OPINION

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CUBA

And The Strange CIA

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■ THE CIA's role as a supporter of Castro did not begin with the Bay of Pigs fiasco. It began far back during the Batista regime, when it collaborated with those Cubans working for the overthrow of Batista and the installation of Fidel Castro. There is adequate documentation for this in Ambassador Earl E. T. Smith's book, *The Fourth Floor*. In that volume the Ambassador writes:

On September 5, 1957, at the naval base in Cienfuegos in Las Villas Province, Cuban naval officers, with the mutual assistance of civilian revolutionaries, launched their biggest uprising up to that time against the Batista government. . . . Our information on the revolt came to us through our No. 2 CIA man in the Embassy, whose activities in giving aid and comfort to the Castro forces was disclosed at the court-martial of the naval officers who participated in the revolt. At this trial, it was

divulged that an officer of the American Embassy had advised the revolutionaries that, if the revolution were successful and Batista overthrown, the United States would recognize the revolutionaries. This gave much moral encouragement to the rebels.

The Ambassador was naturally alarmed at the CIA's pro-Castro bias and complete lack of concern over Castro's Communist background. In order to change this situation, Ambassador Smith decided to get in touch with Allen Dulles, directly. He sent a telegram to the head of the CIA, marked "Allen Dulles' Eyes Only." According to Smith, "The telegram recommended the placing of an agent in the top echelon of the Fidel Castro forces, then hiding in the Sierra Maestra hills, so that the CIA could keep themselves informed as to the extent of Communist infiltration and as to the extent of Communist control of the Castro movement [26th of July Movement]. I must assume that this was never done, or they would have been better informed."

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THROUGH Ambassador Smith's testimony we know of the CIA's participation in the Cienfuegos revolt, and we can wonder whether the CIA did more to help Castro than Ambassador Smith ever discovered. We do know that the CIA immediately began to organize the anti-Communist opposition after Castro acquired power. This may not have been done because the CIA intended to

overthrow Castro or because different elements in the CIA were working at cross purposes, but because they intended to control the anti-Castro opposition from the very beginning and to control it all the way.

This is not a terribly novel approach. We have seen the same tactic employed in CIA activities behind the Iron Curtain. However, when resistance to the Communist regime has become so widespread that it reaches massive proportions, the techniques used to destroy it have invariably been the same as those employed in Hungary: The revolution is provoked prematurely by American promises that outside aid will be forthcoming. The revolt takes place but the aid never arrives. The resisters play themselves out and are eventually crushed. America pleads its case in the United Nations where it does the least amount of good for the freedom fighters, and the State Department weeps crocodile tears until the heat dies down and it can invite the new Communist rulers to the White House.

What makes the above scheme so dastardly is that the patriots revolt *prematurely* before they have the power to do the entire job successfully by themselves. In their eager desire for an early liberation, they are willing to take the risk of a premature uprising if they can be sure of receiving outside help at the crucial moment. The aid is vital for there are never sanctuaries for escape: It is aid and freedom or betrayal and death. But the promised outside help has never arrived, just as the air cover over the Bay of Pigs never arrived when it spelled the difference between success and failure.

In Cuba, the CIA operated according to past practice. For here, again, was the CIA organizing the resistance in advance and leading it into the bowels of total hell. In the case of Cuba, it led young men — some with less than a week of training — to the Bay of Pigs

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